

*Hebrews 5 v11 We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. v12 In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! v13 Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. v14 But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Hebrews 6 v1 Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, v2 instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. v3 And God permitting, we will do so. v4 It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, v5 who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, v6 if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace. v7 Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God. v8 But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned. v9 Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are confident of better things in your case--things that accompany salvation. v10 God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. v11 We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. v12 We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised. Heb 5:11-14, 6:1-12*

**I want to begin this message by proposing some scenarios, and then asking some questions.**

If you sent a child to the best school in the world, and you knew the child had a tested IQ of genius. **WHAT WOULD YOU EXPECT THE OUTCOME TO BE? SURELY, YOU WOULD EXPECT TO HAVE AN EDUCATED PERSON AT THE END.**

If you provided a building contractor with building plans, building material, skilled workers, and money. **WHAT WOULD YOU EXPECT THE OUTCOME TO BE? SURELY, YOU WOULD EXPECT TO HAVE A BUILDING AT THE END.**

If you placed some flour, baking powder, butter, chocolate chips, eggs, sugar, vanilla essence and salt in a bowl and mixed the ingredients together, and placed the batter in the oven. **WHAT WOULD YOU EXPECT THE OUTCOME TO BE? SURELY, YOU WOULD EXPECT TO HAVE Choc-Chip cookies AT THE END AND NOT ROAST BEEF.**

THE POINT I AM TRYING TO MAKE IS,

WE DON'T EXPECT THINGS TO REMAIN THE SAME. WE EXPECT THAT THERE WOULD BE PROGRESS, YET MANY ARE NO DEEPER IN THEIR FAITH COMPARED TO WHEN THEY BECAME A BELIEVER.

**WHAT IS THE SIGN OF MATURITY?  
THE CAPACITY TO REPRODUCE**

**A learner becomes a teacher, when they can reproduce the lesson.**

# HOW TO KNOW IF YOU HAVE MATURED IN YOUR FAITH.

## **1. A DESCRIPTION of IMMATURE BELIEVERS.**

*Hebrews 5 v11 We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. v12 In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! v13 Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. v14 But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.*

### **1.1 SLOW TO LEARN – v11**

The phrase “slow to learn” actually means “slow to listen”. Afrikaans has a saying, “die wat nie hoor, moet voel.” in English, “those who do not listen, must feel”. The bible has the answer to many issues, yet people continue to ignore the bible at their peril.

### **1.2 SLOW TO TEACH – v12**

Anybody who has ever been a teacher will tell you, “when you prepare a lesson to teach to others, you learn a lot more than when you are covering the material to write an exam”.

### **1.3 SLOW TO PRACTICE – v13**

*v13 Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, **is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.*** The word righteousness refers to how we exercise our faith in public. Righteousness has to do with “Right – Living”.

### **1.4 SLOW TO INDEPENDENCE – v14**

*v14 But solid food is for the mature, **who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.*** I believe one of the greatest weaknesses we have in our education system, as well as in the church is, “People are being taught ‘what to think’, not ‘how to think’.” When last did you read the bible and discover a truth for yourself?

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### A DESCRIPTION of IMMATURE BELIEVERS.

## **2. A DEMAND to GROW beyond the BASICS.**

*Hebrews 6 v1 Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, v2 instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. v3 And God permitting, we will do so.*

**WHAT ARE THE BASICS? – v1 “elementary teachings”**

2.1 **REPENTANCE FROM ACTS THAT LEAD TO DEATH – v1b**

The first step in moving in the right direction, is to stop moving in the wrong direction. So many people confuse remorse with repentance. Remorse is feeling sorry. Remorse is the BABALAS of the alcoholic. Repentance is the AA program for the alcoholic.

2.2 **FAITH IN GOD – v1c**

After turning away from something, you must turn toward something, or rather SOMEONE - GOD. *Hebrews 11:6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.*

1.3 **INSTRUCTIONS ABOUT BAPTISMS – v2a**

Many people who claim to have placed their faith in Jesus, fail in the very first step of obedience in becoming a believer. The bible is very clear about the logical order of growing in our faith. The bible says, repent, believe and be baptised. Not, be baptised, then express your belief, then maybe repent.

1.4 **OTHER IMPORTANT BELIEFS – v2b**

*“the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.”* These are just three random topics that mature Christians should know something about. Can you tell me what you believe about these three topics and other important doctrines of the church.

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**A DESCRIPTION of IMMATURE BELIEVERS.**

**A DEMAND to GROW beyond the BASICS.**

**3. A DANGER SIGN to TAKE NOTE OF.**

*Hebrews 6 v4 It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, v5 who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, v6 if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.*

These are some of the most difficult verses in the whole bible to understand and explain. Not that they contain difficult words, but rather that they contain a very difficult message.

THE MESSAGE APPEARS VERY CLEAR. – IF YOU TURN YOUR BACK ON JESUS AFTER INITIALLY FOLLOWING HIM, YOU LOOSE YOUR SALVATION AND CAN NEVER COME BACK.

**HOWEVER, THERE ARE OTHER FACTORS TO CONSIDER**

3.1 **THE DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL SECURITY**

The bible clearly teaches, “once saved – always saved”. If we could lose our salvation, we would never know when we had it. Jesus said, “no one can snatch them out of my hands.”

### 3.2 **THE WORD “IF” IN VERSE 6**

The writer of the book of Hebrews, is not saying that this has happened, but rather is speculating about what could happen “IF” people turned their back on Jesus.

### 3.3 **THE COMPLETED WORK OF CHRIST**

Jesus died “once for all” and can never or does not need to ever be crucified again.

### 3.4 **THE PHRASE “FALL AWAY” IN VERSE 6**

This does not refer to sinful behaviour, but rather to outward blatant public rejection of Jesus. The “Sin against the Holy Spirit”

SO, HOW SHOULD WE UNDERSTAND THIS PASSAGE?

The writer of the book of Hebrews is using the language of HYPEBOLE. – Saying something in an exaggerated way to make a point.

ALL HE IS SAYING IS:

**ARE YOU TAKING YOUR FAITH SERIOUSLY?**

This a big red flag to tell us to PASSOP.

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## **4. Are DIRECTIONS we are to FOLLOW.**

*v7 Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God. v8 But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned. v9 Even though we speak like this, dear friends, we are confident of better things in your case--things that accompany salvation. v10 God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them. v11 We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. v12 We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.*

### 4.1 **LEAD A PRODUCTIVE LIFE – v7-8**

*v7 Land that drinks in the rain often falling on it and that produces a crop useful to those for whom it is farmed receives the blessing of God. v8 But land that produces thorns and thistles is worthless and is in danger of being cursed. In the end it will be burned.* When a plant stops producing fruit we dig it up and throw it away.

### 4.2 **MAKE OURSELVES ACCOUNTABLE TO EACH OTHER – v9**

The phrase “*things that accompany salvation*” is a Greek idiom that refers to “keeping hold of others”, i.e., accountable.

### 4.3 **LOVING OUR NEIGHBOR – v10**

*v10 God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.* JESUS SAID Matthew 25:35-36 *For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I*

*was a stranger and you invited me in, v36 I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'*

4.4 **PERSEVERANCE – v11-12**

*v11 We want each of you to show this same diligence to the very end, in order to make your hope sure. v12 We do not want you to become lazy, but to imitate those who through faith and patience inherit what has been promised.* The bible is full of encouragements to “press on toward the goal.”

## **SO, HOW TO KNOW IF YOU HAVE MATURED IN YOUR FAITH.**

**UNDERSTAND the DESCRIPTION of IMMATURE BELIEVERS.**  
**LISTEN TO the DEMAND to GROW beyond the BASICS.**  
**HEED the DANGER SIGN to TAKE NOTE OF.**  
**OBEY the DIRECTIONS we are to FOLLOW.**